

From: bob@bob.usuhs.mil@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR,bob@bob.usuhs.mil@inetgw
Date: 1/25/02 5:03pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As a programmer for 30 years, a University professor for 20 years, and now as a faculty member in a department of Medical Informatics, I would like to comment on the Proposed Final Judgment (PFJ) in United States v. Microsoft.

I know that many of my colleagues have written to you with detailed explanations about how the PFJ will allow Microsoft to continue to exercise effective anticompetitive conduct that continues its monopoly. I have read some of them. They are accurate and well argued. I urge you to read the message sent to you by Dan Kegel. I strongly support his view.

Much of the PFJ has been crafted in such a way that it allows Microsoft to get around most restrictions, and many important restrictions are missing altogether. A software engineer can see this where perhaps a lawyer cannot. For one small but potent example, nothing in the PFJ requires Microsoft to release information about file formats. Note that undocumented Microsoft file formats form part of the Applications Barrier to Entry ("Findings of Fact" paragraphs 20 and 39). Why was this omitted?

There are more egregious problems with Microsoft's behavior that are not addressed by the PFJ. For example, Microsoft "encourages" rumors that WINE, a program that runs under the Linux operating system and allows Windows programs to run under Linux, violates Microsoft Patents. Just what patents those may be has never been revealed, but this rumor has cut off funds and development that would have gone to the support of the WINE project.

Microsoft does not promote the best technology. It innovates by buying up its competition when it can, and by overwhelming its competition with inferior substitutes packaged with Windows.

The Proposed Final Judgment is not in the public interest and should not be approved without substantial repair.

Dr. Robert Williams

The opinions expressed herein are those of the author
and are not to be construed
as representing the USU, the DoD, or the U.S. Government in any way.